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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY JD DATE 20 AUG 1987

The Counselor

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July 24, 1950

Mr. Secretary:

The following is simply by way of confirmation
of the remarks I made at this morning's meeting.

/s/ O.F.K.

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July 24, 1950

1 - Mr. Secretary

Since sending you my recent memorandum on what seems to me to be the danger we are running with respect to Formosa, I have looked into this matter further with a view to getting a detailed picture of where we stand.

As far as I can ascertain, the following are the facts:

1. We have no first hand evidence of what is happening along the Chinese mainland coast opposite Formosa, but there are numerous reports of concentration of shipping in that area, presumably for an amphibious operation.
2. The Chinese Communists have continued to manifest a determination to seize Formosa, and have recently appointed one of their best generals to command this operation.
3. The typhoon season is approaching, and there is a premium from the communist point of view on speed in the mounting of the operation.
4. There is no evidence as yet of the Chinese National Government sufficient to spot the launch of an operation. In reconnaissance now conducting is an operation.
5. I cannot learn that we have any surface vessels whatsoever in the Formosa Strait or in the immediate vicinity.
6. Chiang has not disposed his forces on the island with a view to the best interests of the defense of the island; and we can have no confidence that there will be any effective resistance from these forces if any sizable number of Chinese Communist forces get ashore.

It seems to me that this situation is highly dangerous and not really tolerable. The President said in his statement of June 27 that the Seventh Fleet had been ordered

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to prevent any attack on Formosa. If it is our view (and only the armed forces can confirm this) that we are not in a position to spot the beginning of such an operation and to stop it at sea, and if my conclusion is correct that Chiang's forces on the island, as at present disposed and led, are quite unreliable for purposes of defense, then I think we must consider demanding of the Generalissimo an entirely different arrangement which would give us adequate control over his forces. It must be borne in mind that those forces should be entirely adequate to repel any invasion attempt the Chinese Communists may try to mount at this time, provided they are properly commanded.

George F. Kennan

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